of the export of cotton has been able to arrest the steeply rising trend in the prices of raw cotton.

(c) Government have permitted duty-free import of 5 lakh bales of cotton, estimated to cost about US $ 169 million at prevailing international prices by spinning mills. The countries from which, the cotton is intended to be imported are Eqypt Sudan; USA; CIS countries, Australia and some African countries.

(d) and (e) The Government's decision to allow duty-free import of cotton is expected to ease pressure on domestic availability of raw cotton and would be able to contain the upward rise in the cotton prices. The cotton prices are prevailing at 55% to 110 % above Minimum Support Price levels are therefore, quite remunerative for the cotton growers.

Request for import of cotton and dehoarding opsrations

2233. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tamil Nadu Government has rsquested the Central Government to import cotton and launch dehoariding operations within the country to control the prices of cotton and yarn;

(b) if so, what are the reasons made out for this demand; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Request has been made because of the shortage in the availability of raw cotton and consequent increase in the domestic prices of cotton and cotton yarn, leading to hardship to the handloom and powerloom weavers;

(c) The Government has permitted duty free import of 5 lakh bales of cotton by the spinning mills and have asked State Govsrnments to take dehoarding measures.

Revival package for sick NTC Mills

2234. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be plsased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal of revival package for the sick mills of National Textile Corporation and 70,000 workers are likely to be subjected to the voluntary retirement scheme;

(b) whether the Trade Unions have expressed their reservations about this proposal and demanded modernisation of the mills; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government to the demand of Trade Unions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) to (c) The Cotton Textie Research Associations have on the directions of the Ministry of Textiles prepared fresh modernisation Plans for the revival of National Textile Corporation which involve, inter-alia, the rationalisation of 70885 officers, staff and workers under the Voluntary Retirement Scheme. The Sub-Committee of the Special Committee on NTC, which includes, representatives of INTUC, NLO, HMS BMS, AITUC and CITU, have accepted the Plans of this Cotton Textile Research Associations with the proviso that "restructuring with modernisation has to be done at each unit level". The report of the Sub-Committee has been placed before the Special Committee on NTC.

Indifference to the promotion of Jute goods exports

2235. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state: